

# **EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS SECTION**

TEL: 880-2-883-7150-4

FAX: 880-2-9881677, 9885688

E-MAIL: [DhakaPA@state.gov](mailto:DhakaPA@state.gov)

WEBSITE: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov>



## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **U.S. GOVERNMENT SUPPORTS FISCAL DECENTRALIZATION, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY**

**DHAKA, MARCH 9 --** USAID, the U.S. Government's premier development agency, facilitated a national level advocacy meeting to hold dialogue on "Fiscal Decentralization of Local Government" in Dhaka today. The event brought together relevant government authorities and policy-makers to discuss specific steps to decentralize the national government's financial management and to provide greater financial authority and power to local governments. The goal is to permit local governments to better plan their resources and implement their budgets in partnership with community members.

The U.S. Government, through USAID, is providing \$3.8 million in funding to Rupantar, a Bangladesh-based NGO, to implement the "Improving Local Level Governance by Strengthening Union Parishad & Creating Citizens Awareness (ILLG)" project, which will run from August 2002 through March 2011. The project is working with 214 local governments in the southwest and northwest regions of Bangladesh. Today's dialogue was organized by Rupantar as part of the ILLG project.

USAID/Bangladesh Mission Director Denise Rollins, Deputy Speaker of the Bangladesh National Parliament Col. (Retd) Shawkat Ali, State Minister of LGRD Zahangir Kabir Nanok, local elected officials, representatives of local government associations and NGOs, civil society members and members of the media attended the meeting and provided their opinions.

Through USAID, the U.S. Government administers programs in five key areas in Bangladesh: improving health and pre-primary education; creating income opportunities for rural poor; supporting good governance; enhancing food security; and strengthening disaster preparedness and providing emergency assistance following natural disasters. Since 1971, the U.S. Government has provided over \$5.8 billion in assistance to Bangladesh.

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